

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

THE EMINENT DIVINE'S SUNDAY DISCOURSE.

Subject: "Woman Wronged"—Lessons Drawn From the Conduct of Vashti, the Veiled—The Glory of Those Who Staunch the Battle Wounds, As Florence Nightingale Did.

Text: "Bring Vashti, the queen, before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look upon. But the queen Vashti refused to come."—Esther 1, 11, 12.

We stand amid the palaces of Shushan. The pinnacles are aflame with the morning light. The columns rise festooned and wreathed; the wealth of empires flashing from the groves; the ceilings adorned with images of bird and beast, and scenes of prowess and conquest. The walls are hung with shields, and emblazoned until it seems that the whole round of splendors is exhausted. Each arch is a mighty leaf of architectural achievement. Golden stars shining down on glowing arabesque. Hangings of embroidered work in which mingle the blueness of the sky, the greenness of the grass and the whiteness of the sea-foam. Tapestries hung on silver rings, wedding together the pillars of marble. Pavilions reaching out in every direction. These for repose, filled with luxuriant couches, in which weary limbs sink until all fatigue is submerged. These for carousal, where kings drink down a kingdom at one swallow. Amazing spectacles! Light of silver dripping down over stairs of ivory on shields of gold. Floors of stained marble, sunset red and night black, and inlaid with gleaming pearls. In connection with this palace there is a garden, where the mighty men of foreign lands are seated at a banquet. Under the spread of oak and linden and acacia the tables are arranged. The breath of honeysuckle and frankincense fills the air. Fountains leap up into the light, the spray struck through with rainbows falling into crystalline basins upon flowering shrubs—then rolling down through channels of marble, and widening out here and there into pools swirling with the fluvial of foreign aqueducts, bordered with scarlet anemones, hypericums, and many-colored ranunculi.

Meats of rarest bird and beast smoking up amid wreaths of aromatics. The vases filled with apples and almonds. The baskets piled up with apricots and figs and oranges and pomegranates. Melons tastefully twined with leaves of acacia. The bright waters of Belshazzar filling the urns and dripping outside the rim in flashing beads amid the traceries. Wine from the royal vats of Ispahan and Shiraz, in bottles of tinted shell, and dilly-shaped cups of silver, and flacons and chalices of solid gold. The music rises higher and the revelry breaks out into wilder transport, and the wine has flushed the cheek and touched the brain, and leader than all other voices are the hiccough of the inebriates, the gabble of fools, and the song of the drunkards.

In another part of the palace Queen Vashti is entertaining the Princess of Persia at a banquet. Drunken Abasuerus says to his servants: "You go and fetch Vashti from that banquet with the women, and bring her to this banquet with the men, and let me display her beauty." The servants immediately start to obey the king's command; but there was a rule in Oriental society that no woman might appear in public without having her face veiled. Yet here was a mandate that no one dare dispute, demanding that Vashti come in unveiled before the multitude. However, there was in Vashti's soul a principle more regal than Abasuerus, more brilliant than the gold of Shushan, of more wealth than the realm of Persia, which commanded her to obey this order of the king; and so all the righteousness and holiness and modesty of her nature rose up into one sublime refusal. She says: "I will not go into the banquet unveiled." Abasuerus was infuriated, and Vashti, robbed of her position and her estate, is driven forth in poverty and ruin to suffer the scorn of a nation, and yet to receive the applause of after generations, who shall rise up to admire this martyr to integrity. Well, the last vestige of that feast is gone; the last garland has faded; the last arch has fallen; the last tankard has been destroyed; and Shushan is in ruins; but as long as the world stands there will be multitudes of men and women, familiar with the Bible, who will come into this picture gallery of God and admire the divine portrait of Vashti the queen, Vashti the veiled, Vashti the sacrifice, Vashti the silent.

In the first place, I want you to look upon Vashti the queen. A blue ribbon, frayed with white, drawn around her forehead, indicated her queenly position. It was no small honor to be queen in such a realm as that. Hark to the rustle of her robes! See the blaze of her jewels! And yet it is not necessary to have place and regal robes in order to be queenly. When I see a woman with stout faith in God, putting her foot upon all meanness and selfishness and godless display, going right forward to serve Christ and the race by a grand and glorious service, I say: "That woman is a queen." And the ranks of Heaven look over the battlements upon the coronation; and whether she comes up from the shanty on the commons or the mansion of the fashionable square, I greet her with the shout, "All hail, Queen Vashti!"

What glory was there on the brow of Mary of Scotland, or Elizabeth of England, or Margaret of France, or Catherine of Russia, compared with the worth of some of our Christian mothers, many of them gone into glory? or of that woman mentioned in the Scriptures, who put her all into the Lord's treasury? or of Jephthah's daughter, who made a demonstration of unselfish patriotism? or of Abigail, who rescued the herds and flocks of her husband? or of Ruth, who toiled under a tropical sun for Boaz, old, begotten Naomi? or of Florence Nightingale, who went at midnight to staunch the battle wounds of the Crimea? or Mrs. Adoniram Judson, who kindled the lights of salvation amid the darkness of Burma? or Mrs. Hemans, who poured out her holy soul in words which will forever be associated with hunter's horn, and captive's chain, and bridal hour, and later throb, and curfew's knell at the dying day? and scores and hundreds of women, unknown on earth, who have given water to the thirsty, and bread to the hungry, and medicine to the sick, and smiles to the discouraged, and their footsteps heard along dark lanes and in government hospitals, and in almshouses, and in prison gates? There may be no royal robe—there may be no palatial surroundings. She does not need them; for all charitable men will unite with the crackling lips of fever-struck hospitals and plague-blotched lazaretto in greeting her as she passes: "Hail! Hail! Queen Vashti!"

Again, I want you to consider Vashti the veiled. Had she appeared before Abasuerus and his court on that day with her face unveiled she would have shocked all the delicacies of Oriental society, and the very men who in their intoxication demanded that she come, in their sober moments would have despised her. As some flowers seem to thrive best in the dark lane and in

the shadow, and where the sun does not seem to reach them, so God appoints to most womanly natures a retiring and unobtrusive spirit. God once in a while does call an Isabella to a throne, a Miriam to strike the timbrel at the front of a host, or a Marie Antoinette to quell a French mob, or a Deborah to stand at the front of an armed battalion, crying out: "Up! Up! This is the day in which the Lord will deliver Sisera into thy hands." And when the women are called to such outdoor work and to such heroic positions, God prepares them for it; and they have iron in their soul, and lightnings in their eye, and the borrowed strength of the Lord Omnipotent in their right arm. They walk through furnaces as though they were hedges of wild flowers, and cross seas as though they were shimmering sapphires, and all the harpies of hell down to their dungeon at the stamp of womanly indignation.

But these are the exceptions. Generally, Dorcas would rather make a garment for the poor boy; Rebecca would rather fill the trough of the camels; Hannah would rather make a coat for Samuel; the Hebrew maid would rather give a prescription for Naaman's leprosy; the woman of Sarepta would rather gather a few sticks to cook a meal for famished Elijah; Phoebe would rather carry a letter for the inspired apostle; Mother Lois would rather educate Timothy in the Scriptures. When I see a woman going about her daily duty, with cheerful dignity presiding at the table, with kind and gentle but firm discipline presiding in the nursery, going out into the world without any blast of trumpets, following in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good—I say: "This is Vashti with a veil on."

But when I see a woman of unblinking boldness, loud voiced, with a tongue of infinite clatter, with arrogant look, passing through the streets with the step of a walking-beam, gayly arrayed in a very hurricane of millinery, I cry out: "Vashti has lost her veil!" When I see a woman struggling for political preferment—trying to force her way on up to conspicuous, amid the masculine demagogues, who stand with swollen fists and bloodshot eyes and postiferous breath, to guard the polls—wanting to go through the lawlessness and defilement of popular sovereignty, who crawl up from the saloons and the foul and vermin-covered, to decide questions of justice and order and civilization—when I see a woman, I say, who wants to press through all that horrible sea to get to public place and power, I say: "Ah, what a pity! Vashti has lost her veil!"

When I see a woman of comely features, and of adroitness of intellect, and endowed with all the schools can do for her, and of high social position, yet moving in society with superciliousness and hauteur, as though she would have people know their place, and with an undefined combination of girlish and strut and rhodomontade, endowed with allopathic quantities of talk, but only homoeopathic infinitesimals of sense, the terror of dry-goods clerks and railroad conductors, discoverers of significant meanings in plain conversation, prodigies of badinage and innuendo—I say: "Vashti has lost her veil!"

Again, I want you this morning to consider Vashti the sacrifice. Who is this that I see coming out of that palace gate of Shushan? It seems to me that I have seen her before. She comes homeless, houseless, friendless, trading along with a broken heart. Who is she? It is Vashti the sacrifice. Oh! what a change it was from regal position to a wayfarer's crust! A little while ago, approved and sought for; now, none so poor as to acknowledge her acquaintance. Vashti the sacrifice!

And you and I have seen it many a time. Here is a home, empaneled with beauty. All that refinement and books and wealth can do for that home has been done; but Abasuerus, the husband and the father, is taking hold on paths of sin. He is gradually going down. After awhile he will founder and struggle like a wild beast in the hunter's net—further away from God, further away from the right. Soon the light apparel of the children will turn to rags; soon the household song will become the sobbing of a broken heart. The old story over again. Brutal Centaurs breaking up the marriage feast of Lapheth. The house full of outrage and cruelty and abomination, while trading forth from the palace gate are Vashti and her children. There are homes in all parts of this land that are in danger of such breaking up. Oh, Abasuerus! that you should stand in a home, by a dissipated life destroying the peace and comfort of that home. God forbid that your children should ever have to write their hands, and have people point their finger at them as they pass down the street, and say: "There goes a drunkard's child." God forbid that the little feeble should ever have to trudge the path of poverty and wretchedness! God forbid that any evil spirit born of the wine-cup or the brandy-glass should come forth and uproot that garden, and with a lasting, blustering, all-consuming curse, shut forever the palace gate against Vashti and the children.

One night during our Civil War I went to Hagerstown to look at the army, and I stood on a hill-top and looked down upon them. I saw the camp-fires all through the valleys and all over the hills. It was a weird spectacle, those camp-fires, and I stood and watched them; and the soldiers who were gathered around them were, no doubt, talking of their homes, and of the long march they had taken, and of the battles they were to fight; but after awhile I saw these camp-fires begin to lower and they continued to lower until they were all gone out, and the army slept. It was impossible when I saw the camp-fires; it was impossible in the darkness when I thought of the great host asleep. Well, God looks down from Heaven, and He sees the firesides of Christendom and the loved ones gathered around these firesides. There are the camp-fires where we warm ourselves at the close of day, and talk over the battles of life we have fought and the battles that are yet to come. God grant that when at last these fires begin to go out, and conflagration to lower until finally they are extinguished, and the ashes of consumed hope strewn the hearth of the old homestead, it may be because we have—

Gone to sleep that last sleep, From which none ever wake to weep.

Now we are an army on the march of life. Then we shall be an army bivouacked in the tent of the grave.

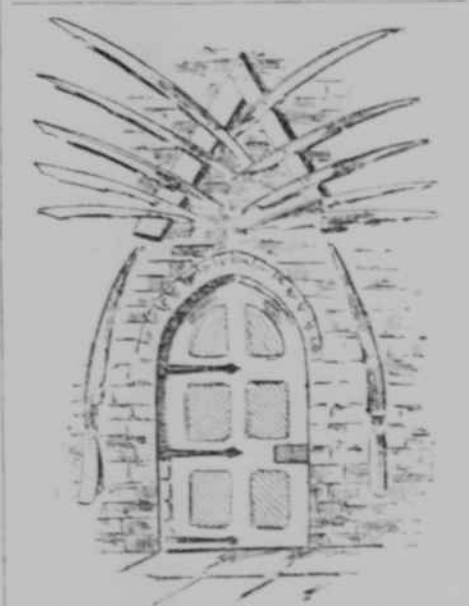
Once more, I want you to look at Vashti the silent. You do not hear any outcry from this woman as she goes forth from the palace gate. From the very dignity of her nature, you know there will be no vociferation. Sometimes in life it is necessary to make a report; sometimes in life it is necessary to resist; but there are crises when the most important thing to do is to keep silence. The philosopher, confident in his newly discovered principle, waiting for the coming of more intelligent generations, willing that men should laugh at the lightning rod and cotton-gin and steamboat and telegraph—waiting for long years through the scoffing of philosophical school, in grand and magnificent silence, Galileo, condemned by mathematicians, and monks, and cardinals, caricatured everywhere, yet waiting and watching with his telescope to see the coming up of stellar reinforcements, when the stars in their courses would fight for the Copernican system; then sitting down in complete

blindness and deafness to wait for the coming on of the generations who would build his monument and bow at his grave. The reformer, exonerated by his contemporaries, fastened in a pillory, the slow fires of public contempt burning under him, ground under the cylinders of the printing-press, yet calmly waiting for the day when purity of soul and heroism of character will get the sanction of earth and the plaudits of Heaven. Affliction enduring without any complaint the sharpness of the pang, and the violence of the storm, and the heat of the chain, and the darkness of the night—waiting until a divine hand shall be put forth to soothe the pang, and hush the storm, and release the captive. A wife abused, persecuted, and a perpetual exile from every earthly comfort—waiting, waiting, until the Lord shall gather up His dear children in a heavenly home, and no poor Vashti will ever be thrust out from the palace gate. Jesus, in silence and answering not a word, drinking the gall, and bearing the Cross, in prospect of the rapturous consummation when Angels thronged His chariot wheel, And bore Him to His throne, Then swept their golden harps and sang: "The glorious work is done!"

SCYTHES IN A CHURCH.

Cromwell's Men Used Them with Terrible Effect in a Battle at Winceby.

In the seventeenth century, when Oliver Cromwell was a power in England, agricultural implements were turned into swords, and did a great deal of damage. Cromwell fought a great many battles, but one of the bloodiest of them was the battle of Winceby. It was at this contest between the Puritans and Royalists that



SCYTHES IN HORNCASTLE CHURCH.

scythes were used, and some of the implements that were wielded with such terrible effect are now to be seen in the church of St. Mary, Horncastle, as depicted in the illustration.

It appears that the scythes were collected after the battle. Local history records that a narrow road near Winceby is still known as "Slash Lane," owing to the numbers which fell on this memorable occasion. Over 500 were slaughtered in one place, owing to a gate being closed through which they were attempting to pass. These scythes and hay knives, some of which yet remain in the shafts to which they were affixed in order to render them the more formidable as weapons of defense, are placed against the wall, over the north entrance, inside St. Mary's Church, and are in a fair state of preservation.

Sending Messages at Sea.

This is the way messages are sent from ship to ship during the daytime. The tar waving the flags is signaling



GIVING AND RECEIVING SIGNALS.

and the officers on the bridge are reading like signals coming from the other vessel.

Rain for Plants.

Rain does plants comparatively little good until it enters the soil, where it can be absorbed by their roots. A daily record of the amount of water in the soil would indicate whether the indications were favorable or otherwise for certain crops. There is a plan for burying specially constructed electrodes in the soil, in order that by measuring the resistance to the passage of a current through the soil the amount of moisture can be ascertained. This method was suggested by the necessity of grounding thoroughly telephone and telegraph lines. If the terminals are not continually in a moist soil the lines do not work during dry seasons.

Wealth and Renown.

She—Which would you rather be—rich or famous? He—Rich. Then I could give a yacht to the Government and get famous, too.

HOW CHILDREN SHOULD STUDY.

Berlin Pedagogue Thinks Holidays Should Be Thickly Distributed.

So much time has been devoted to the discussion of what should be studied by children and how it should be taught that comparatively little has been employed in solving the problem, perhaps almost as important as either of the other two—the problem of when the studying and teaching should be done. A Berlin pedagogue has taken up this neglected branch of the great subject and his investigations have had interesting and suggestive results.

The best working days, he says, are Mondays and Tuesdays, or any two that come directly after a holiday. The obvious deduction is that the insertion of a full holiday in the middle of the week would tend to the keeping up of mental activity among school children and so add to the amount of real work accomplished. Those hours of the day, as well as those of the week, which follow rest are most valuable, and it is advised that the first two hours of the morning be reserved for the tasks which children find most fatiguing. Regarding vacations, this authority asserts that they are at present needlessly long, but far from sufficiently frequent. The refreshing effect of each vacation is demonstrated in every school-room. It is no greater, however, after two months of play than after one, and it lasts no longer.

In this connection the value of impetus must also be taken into account, and it would hardly do to alternate months of idleness with months of work, but the fact remains that the periods of activity are now too prolonged. The Berlin man says that the studies most fatiguing to child minds are, in order, mathematics, foreign languages, gymnastics and, for many, singing and drawing, while the natural sciences and history cause little strain. He is surprisingly emphatic in opposing gymnastic exercises for the young, and asserts that they are no substitute for sleep, baths and walks.—New York Times.

That the child is father to the man is confirmed by a reference to the present restless Emperor of Germany in the diary of a prominent guest at the wedding of the Prince of Wales. "The little Prince William of Prussia," wrote the Bishop of Oxford, "was placed between his two small English uncles to keep him quiet, both of whom he bit on the bare Highland legs whenever they touched him to keep him still." Undes grown up and ministers grown wise have learned to omit the admonitory touch with Emperor William!



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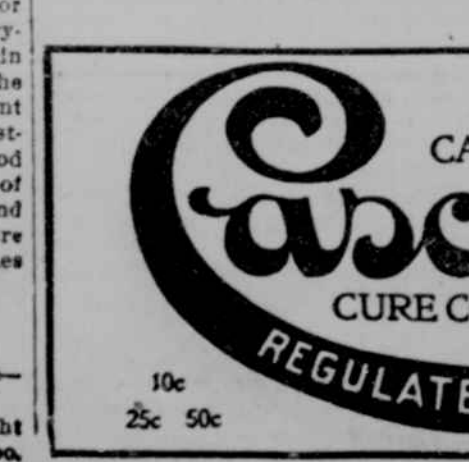
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